



The refurbished Saint Michael Pavilion officially reopens

The site of what used to be Aruba's old in Oranjestad was turned into a home for the aged when the Horacio E. Oduber Hospital opened nearly thirty years ago. Divided into two sections, the St. Pedro di Verona and the St. Michael Pavilions, the second had fallen into a state of disrepair, and through the diligence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Marisol Lopez-Tromp.

On Thursday afternoon, November 9, a ceremony to express gratitude to all those that contributed to the reconstruction of the Saint Michael Pavilion, resulting in a beautiful facility for the elderly was conducted in the new dining room. Minister Tromp was present for the event, along with Jossy Figueroa of the Department of Public Works, (DOA) and both addressed the gathering. Minister Lopez-Tromp expressed that "improving the quality of life for the elderly, the island's youth and battered women is a priority of her administration of her ministry, so the completion of his project is very gratifying."

Additionally addressing the gathering was the President of SABA, the organization dedicated to the care of elderly, Horacio Oduber. After the initial ceremony conducted by the Ronny Nicolaas, the director of the facility, Mr. Oduber gave Minister Tromp and other parliament members a tour of the grounds. The refurbished facility now contains five private rooms and twenty-one semi-private quarters. There is also a doctor's consulting office, a physio-therapy room, dining room, recreation room, and both a fire alarm system and a system for calling for assistance in each room. In particular, they offered thanks to the workers of Bohama, N.V., for the very beautiful gardens that will provide a beautiful place for the elderly to gather and spend their days.

During the opening ceremonies, individuals were recognized by SABA for their contribution to seeing this 2.8 million-florin project realized. The staff of SABA distributed gifts to the minister, Mr. Figueroa of the DOA, and various workers that went above and beyond only "doing a job" because of the nature of the project. Frans Aares, the director of Bohama, and Erwin Stanko, project manager from Bohama were also singled out for mention, and Mr. Stanko, in return awarded Minister Lopez-Tromp with a framed collage of the reconstruction process.

Ronny Nicolaas stated that within two weeks thirty-two of the most self-sustaining residents now at the San Pedro facility will occupy what previously their home, until the renovation project was undertaken in March of 2005. Eventually, it will house forty-seven residents. Bea Nicolaas will preside over the residents as head nurse. He revealed that for the very elderly, change is always difficult, and it will take time, but it will most definitely be an improvement for them.